

25 January 2009

Public Health, Welfare, and Safety Committee
State Capitol Building
Helena, MT 59620

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY
Exhibit No. 7
Date 1-28-2009
Bill No. SB ~~233~~ 233

Re: SB 233 hearing; prescription authority for psychologists

Dear Chairman Brown and Committee Members:

Other committee conflicts preclude my personal testimony before you on SB 233.
Please enter this message in the record.

As a retired optometrist, I relate that we were legislated the right to use topic drugs and some oral drugs for the diagnosis and treatment of the eye beginning in 1977. Many of the arguments used at the time against our right, I have heard repeated against this legislation for psychologists.

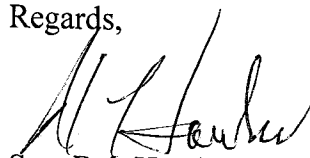
Optometrist requirements for advanced training and clinical experience were considerably less than are being required in this bill, though more of our formulary was for topical drug use. You will need to make a judgment call on this issue, but to me the requirements for advanced training seem significant.

Our experience was that there was no related increase in malpractice insurance or reported cases of related malpractice over the next 27 years. The threat of a malpractice lawsuit will be a very effective control to keep the use of psychotropic drugs safely administered by psychologists.

Psychologists by training treat mental patients with an orientation toward behavior modification without the use of drugs, which is to say, that likely drugs would be used only as necessary to back-up their conventional treatment. Research indicates that the best treatment results are obtained through this dual approach.

Finally, this request seems to come out of need for better mental health care and follow-up for underserved populations in our state. I encourage you to give this legislation due consideration.

Regards,



Sen. Bob Hawks
District 33
Bozeman